



The NDPHS holds a ministerial-level conference

New NDPHS Strategy and Declaration on Prison Health adopted; Russia and Finland to lead the Partnership for the next two years

Hosted by the Norwegian Minister of Health and Care Services, Ms. Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen, the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) held yesterday in Oslo, Norway, a **Partnership Annual Conference (PAC)** – its highest decision-making body. The event marked the end of the Norwegian chairmanship of the Partnership. The participants held a discussion on a wide spectrum of issues related to public health and social well-being in the Northern Dimension area, with the focus on the new NDPHS Strategy and the Prison Health as the main themes of the conference.

One of the highlights of this event was the **adoption of the “Declaration on Principles of Cooperation between Prison Health and Public Health Services and Development of a Safer Society.”**¹ This Declaration emphasises that prison health is part of public health. To that end, it calls upon the NDPHS Partner Countries and Organisations to facilitate links between prison medical services and public health services; to encourage operation within codes of human rights and medical ethics; to promote rehabilitation as the purpose of incarceration; to decrease exposure to communicable disease and to raise the level of medical care to meet community standards.

The Conference reviewed the progress of the Partnership and approved the **NDPHS Progress Report for 2009.**² A number of tangible results have been delivered by the Partnership through a wide array of concrete and pragmatic activities which included, but were not limited to: information sharing and dialogue, policy development, project development and implementation, networking solidification, expertise exchange, information production and dissemination, advocacy, as well as administrative and organizational issues. The track record of the Partnership’s achievements clearly demonstrates that it is doing useful work, which contributes to improving public health and social well-being in the region.

The Conference also discussed future direction of the Partnership and its development, and adopted a **new NDPHS Strategy**, which will guide the Partnership’s work during the coming four years.³ This strategy places focus on policy and strategy development, as well as coordination and project facilitation. It underlines the need to strengthen the social well-being dimension in the NDPHS work and foresees that the four currently operating NDPHS Expert Groups will be restructured and, where necessary, new groups be established, all of which will focus on the implementation of concrete time-bound actions. Importantly, the strategy identifies goals and corresponding mid-term operational targets and indicators which aim to make the Partnership more responsive to regional challenges and its work more focused on achieving specific, measurable and time-targeted objectives as well as on evaluating its progress.

Further, while underlining the importance of increased Partnership’s efforts to successfully implement the new NDPHS Strategy, the PAC adopted the **NDPHS Work Plan for 2010.**⁴

Finally, while thanking Norway for successfully chairing the Partnership during its two-year term, the **PAC elected the Russian Federation as the Partnership Chair and Finland as the Co-Chair for the next two years.**

Russia has been the co-chair under Norway’s two year chairmanship period. The Norwegian government highly values collaboration in the high north, and each year we allocate a significant amount of resources

¹ Available at www.ndphs.org/?download,3588,NDPHS_Declaration_on_Prison_Health.pdf

² Available at www.ndphs.org/?download,3592,NDPHS_Progress_report_for_2009_%28as_of_09-11-2009%29.pdf.

³ Available at www.ndphs.org/?download,3594,NDPHS_Strategy.pdf.

⁴ Available at www.ndphs.org/?download,1510,NDPHS_Annual_Work_Plan_for_2008.pdf.

for developing and strengthening the health collaboration between Norway and North-West Russia. It is therefore important that our relations with the federal level in the Russian Federation are also good, something I experience that this chairmanship period has contributed to, said Ms Strøm-Erichsen. I appreciate that Russia is now taking over the chairmanship of the Partnership, and find that it demonstrates the importance of the Partnership for Public Health and Social Well-being as an important framework for the health collaboration between the EU and neighbouring countries in the north.

The **Conclusions by the Chair** presenting in brief the outcome of the Conference are available on the NDPHS website.⁵

NDPHS is...

The NDPHS is a cooperative effort of thirteen governments, the European Commission and eight international organisations. It provides a forum for concerted action to tackle challenges to health and social well-being in the [Northern Dimension area](#). The Partnership's mission is to promote sustainable development of the Northern Dimension area by improving peoples' health and social well-being. It aims to contribute to this process by intensifying cooperation, assisting the Partners and Participants in capacity building, and by enhancing coordination between international activities within the area

View our website at www.ndphs.org and keep an eye on policy developments and explore the world of the NDPHS – a partnership committed to achieving tangible results! You are also welcome to read a recently developed NDPHS leaflet available in several languages at <http://www.ndphs.org/?leaflet>.

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⁵ Available at http://www.ndphs.org/?download.3586.PAC_6_Conclusions_by_the_Chair.pdf.